Weed of the Week

Exotic Bush Honeysuckles

- *Lonicera maackii* (Amur honeysuckle)
- *Lonicera morrowii* (Morrow's honeysuckle)
- *Lonicera tatarica* (Tartarian honeysuckle)

Figure 1- *Lonicera maackii*
Amur honeysuckle

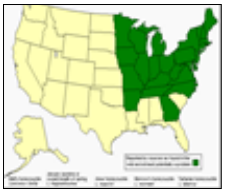
Figure 2- *Lonicera morrowii*
Morrow's honeysuckle

Figure 3- *Lonicera tatarica*
Tartarian honeysuckle

Native Origin: Eurasia (Japan, China, Korea, Manchuria, Turkey and southern Russia); introduced to US for use as ornamentals, for wildlife cover and for soil erosion control.

Description: Exotic bush honeysuckles are upright, generally deciduous shrubs that range from 6 to 15 feet in height. The 1-2 ½ inch, egg-shaped leaves are opposite along the stem and short-stalked. Older stems are often hollow. Pairs of fragrant, tubular flowers less than an inch long are borne along the stem in the leaf axils. Flower color varies from creamy white to pink or crimson in some varieties of Tartarian honeysuckle. The fruits are red to orange, many-seeded berries. Native bush honeysuckles may be confused with these exotic species and cultivars, so proper identification is necessary. Unlike the exotics, most of our native bush honeysuckles have solid stems. Plants reproduce by birds feed on the persistent fruits and widely disseminating seeds across the landscape. Vegetative sprouting also aids in the persistence of these exotic shrubs.

Habitat: : Exotic bush honeysuckles are relatively shade-intolerant and most often occur in forest edge, abandoned field, pasture, roadsides and other open, upland habitats. Woodlands, especially those that have been grazed or otherwise disturbed may also be invaded by exotic bush honeysuckles. Morrow's honeysuckle is capable of invading bogs, fens, lakeshores, sand plains and other uncommon habitat types.



Distribution: Amur, Tartarian, and Morrow's honeysuckle generally range from the central Great Plains to southern New England and south to Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia as shaded on the map.

Ecological Impacts: Exotic bush honeysuckles can rapidly invade and overtake a site, forming a dense shrub layer that crowds and shades out native plant species. They can alter habitats by decreasing light availability, by depleting soil moisture and nutrients, and possibly by releasing toxic chemicals that prevent other plant species from growing in the vicinity. Exotic bush honeysuckles may compete with native bush honeysuckles for pollinators, resulting in reduced seed set for native species. In addition, the fruits of exotic bush honeysuckles, while abundant and rich in carbohydrates, do not offer migrating birds the high-fat, nutrient-rich food sources needed for long flights, that are supplied by native plant species.

Control and Management: Control methods should be initiated prior to seed dispersal (late summer to early autumn) to minimize reinvasion of treated habitats.
Manual- Hand remove seedlings or small plants for light infestation; repeat yearly
Chemical- apply systemic herbicides
Burning- prescribed burning may be effective for exotic bush honeysuckles growing in open habitats.

References: www.nps.gov/plants/alien/map/loni1.htm, www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/loni1.htm, www.hort.uconn.edu/plants

Produced by the USDA Forest Service, Forest Health Staff, Newtown Square, PA.
Invasive Plants website: http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants